

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please add new Claim 39, cancel Claim 35, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and amend Claims 34 and 36 to 38, as shown below.

1. to 33. (Cancelled)

34. (Currently Amended) A data input apparatus comprising:

first input means for inputting data from an internal unit;

second input means for inputting secret key information from an external device stored in an external device;

generating means for generating a digital signature using said data and said secret key information; and

outputting means for outputting said digital signature to said external device.

35. (Cancelled)

36. (Currently Amended) A data input method comprising:

inputting data from an internal unit via a first input means;

inputting secret key information from an external device via a second input means, ~~wherein said external device stores said secret key information;~~

generating a digital signature using said data and said secret key information; and

outputting said digital signature to said external device.

37. (Currently Amended) Computer-executable program code stored on a computer readable medium, said computer-executable program code for use in inputting data in a computer system, the computer-executable program code comprising:

code to input data from an internal unit via a first input means;

code to input secret key information from an external device via a second input means, ~~wherein said external device stores said secret key information;~~

code to generate a digital signature using said data and said secret key information; and

code to output said digital signature to said external device.

38. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable memory medium in which computer-executable process steps are stored, the process steps for inputting data, wherein the process steps comprise:

a first inputting step for inputting data from an internal unit via a first input means;

a second inputting step for inputting secret key information from an external device via a second input means, ~~wherein said external device stores said secret key information;~~

a generating step for generating a digital signature using said data and said secret key information; and

an outputting step for outputting said digital signature to said external device.

39. (New) A data input system comprising:

first input means for inputting data;

compressor means for compressing the data;

second input means for inputting secret key information stored in an external device;

generating means for generating a digital signature using the compressed data and the secret key information;

first outputting means for outputting the digital signature to the external device; and

second output means for outputting the input data.